

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 07MANAGUA1377, GROUP VOICES SUPPORT OF NICARAGUAN POLICE AND

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07MANAGUA1377**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">07MANAGUA1377</a>	<a href="#">2007-05-30 22:28</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Managua</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4103/la-embusa-y-el-gabinete-de-ortega>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4104/d-rsquo-escoto-en-onu-ldquo-un-desafio-de-ortega-a-ee-uu-rdquo>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 001377

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CEN, INL/LP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#)  
SUBJECT: GROUP VOICES SUPPORT OF NICARAGUAN POLICE AND  
MILITARY TO PREVENT ORTEGA DICTATORSHIP

REF: MANAGUA 1184

Classified By: Ambassador Paul Trivelli for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: A group of fourteen prominent Nicaraguans, who call themselves the "Grupo de Opinion" (Opinion Group) are voicing their support of the Nicaraguan National Police and the Armed Forces in order to prevent them from being co-opted by President Daniel Ortega. Rafael Cordoba, a member of the group and a Conservative who worked on communications and publicity for the National Liberal Alliance (ALN-PC), told poloffs that they placed a full-page paid advertisement in both Nicaraguan papers on May 18 to show the public's support of the police and armed forces. Cordoba commented that the timing of the ad worked well, following recent successes in counternarcotics efforts by the police and military and the release of a public opinion poll that showed great public confidence in both organizations. According to the recent poll, the majority of Nicaraguans have confidence in the police and the military and their ability to protect the country from the threats of organized crime, terrorism and nacrotrafficking. Cordoba said that the Grupo de Opinion formed under previous president Enrique Bolanos. They garnered support from well-known Nicaraguans who are listed at the bottom of the ad. Cordoba added that the group of opinion leaders plan additional ad campaigns and will focus efforts on the upcoming municipal elections. END SUMMARY.

Broad Support for Police and Military

¶2. (C) During a meeting with poloffs on May 21, Rafael Cordoba explained that the group of opinion leaders placed the advertisement to show broad support for the police and military in their war on drugs. The ad congratulates the institutions on recent counternarcotics efforts and urges the Nicaraguan government (GON) to respect the independence and professionalism of both the military and the police. The ad calls for the government to support both entities without interfering or undermining their efforts. Cordoba further commented that the ultimate goal of the ad was to prevent a dictatorship. For a dictatorship, President Ortega must have arms, commented Cordoba. He believes that if the police and military understand that civil society supports them, it will be harder for Ortega to co-opt them.

¶3. (C) Cordoba told poloffs that timing of the ad worked well, following recent successes in counternarcotics efforts by the police and military and the release of an opinion poll that showed great public confidence in both organizations. He admitted that the recent seizures that were splashed

across the front pages of the papers for weeks provided a great "hook" for the ad. The full-page ad is half a page of text followed by the signatures of 117 prominent Nicaraguans.

14. (U) A recent public opinion poll by M&R (Reftel) gauged public perception of the first 100 days of Ortega's presidency, but also contained lengthy sections on attitudes toward the police and military. To complete this study, M&R conducted face-to-face interviews of 1,600 Nicaraguans over the age of 16 between April 11 and 14, covering urban, rural, and semi-rural areas in all departments of the country. The survey's margin of error is approximately 2.5 percent. The survey covered public attitudes toward the Ortega management, governing style, exercise of power, and specific actions during the first hundred days as well as attitudes toward the political opposition, social issues, national security, and international relations.

15. (U) The survey showed that 16 percent of those polled have great confidence and 61 percent have some confidence in the police. Indeed, according to the poll, Police Chief Aminta Granera is the most popular figure in the country, outranking even beloved former president Violeta Chamorro. Granera enjoys close to an 80 percent approval rating, with only a 5.5 percent disapproval rating. Those polled gave an average of a 50 percent approval rating when asked about the police force's effectiveness in preventing crimes, dealing with family violence and traffic enforcement. In the fight against narcotrafficking, of those polled, 55 percent have a positive view, 29 percent have no opinion and only 16 percent have a negative perception.

16. (U) The public have great confidence in the armed forces according to the survey -- 45 percent have great confidence, 46 percent have some confidence and only 6 percent have no

confidence. Those surveyed indicated a 73 or 74 percent positive rating on the military's ability to guarantee national security, counter armed groups in the country, fight terrorism and organized crime and protect Nicaragua's borders. The approval rating for the military's efforts to combat international narcotrafficking was even higher, at 76 percent. The approval rating went up to 79 percent in the public's perception of the military's ability to help the population during times of natural disaster.

#### The Group of Opinion Leaders

17. (C) Cordoba told poloffs that a group of opinion leaders that formed during the Bolanos presidency still meet to discuss political issues and the current administration. Cordoba says the group acted as a "kitchen cabinet" and met on Wednesdays to discuss policy and make recommendations to the president. The group originally included mostly liberals and some representatives from civil society. Since then, the group has become more diverse, and now includes a few former Sandinistas. In planning the ad campaign, they reached out to a wide variety of contacts with the draft text of the message. Those who supported the message are listed in the ad; among their numbers are political and civil society leaders, businessmen and well-known artists.

#### Focus on the Municipal Elections

18. (C) Cordoba added that the group of opinion leaders plan additional ad campaigns and will focus their efforts on the upcoming municipal elections. Their goal will be to educate people about the importance of the elections, urge people to get their cedula and then encourage them to vote. He sees the municipal elections as a critical point for the country and predicts that it will be difficult for the opposition parties. On average, only 60 percent of eligible voters vote in the municipal elections and Cordoba believes that many rural voters are unaware of the issues or that there are options beyond the Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC) and the FSLN. In order to maximize scarce resources, the ALN-PC

plans to focus its efforts on the 30 municipalities with populations over 30,000. Cordoba believes they have a better chance in these municipalities, although he told poloffs that it will be a difficult battle. He has heard that the FSLN and PLC are already "buying" votes through offers of employment or "favors."

Mixed Result?

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¶9. (C) So far, there has been no public response from the military and the police to the ad, which surprises Cordoba. He also told poloffs that they made a mistake with the ad by not providing a contact email or website for people who read it and agree with the views expressed. He added that a number of people had already called him and asked why they were not included and given the opportunity to be listed among the supporters.

¶10. (C) At least for the Police Chief, the ad may have produced mixed results. During a meeting with poloff, Police Chief Aminta Granera reported that the advertisement showed the importance of the military and the police but that privately it made her "uncomfortable." She stated that it may draw unwanted attention from Ortega and the FSLN who may interpret it as her "personal campaign" to gain popularity. She commented that if someone "shines too much" the FSLN finds a way to "knock them down." (COMMENT: During the meeting Granera emphatically denied the rumors that she is planning to run for mayor of Managua and made it clear that the extra attention makes her uncomfortable. She believes that it is best to keep a "low profile" so as not to be perceived as a threat to the FSLN. END COMMENT.)  
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